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The President's Daily Brief

24 November 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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North Vietnam

(Page 1)

On *Page 2* we bring Cambodian military developments up to date.

Communist insurgents in northeastern Thailand evidently have for the first time established a secure base. *(Page 3)*

Despite the continuation of heavy firing in the Guinean capital yesterday, most of the force that invaded Sunday is unaccounted for. *(Page 4)*

Dry season supply activity has resumed in the Laotian panhandle. *(Page 5)*

Moscow and Peking have signed their first trade agreement since 1967. *(Page 5)*

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NORTH VIETNAM

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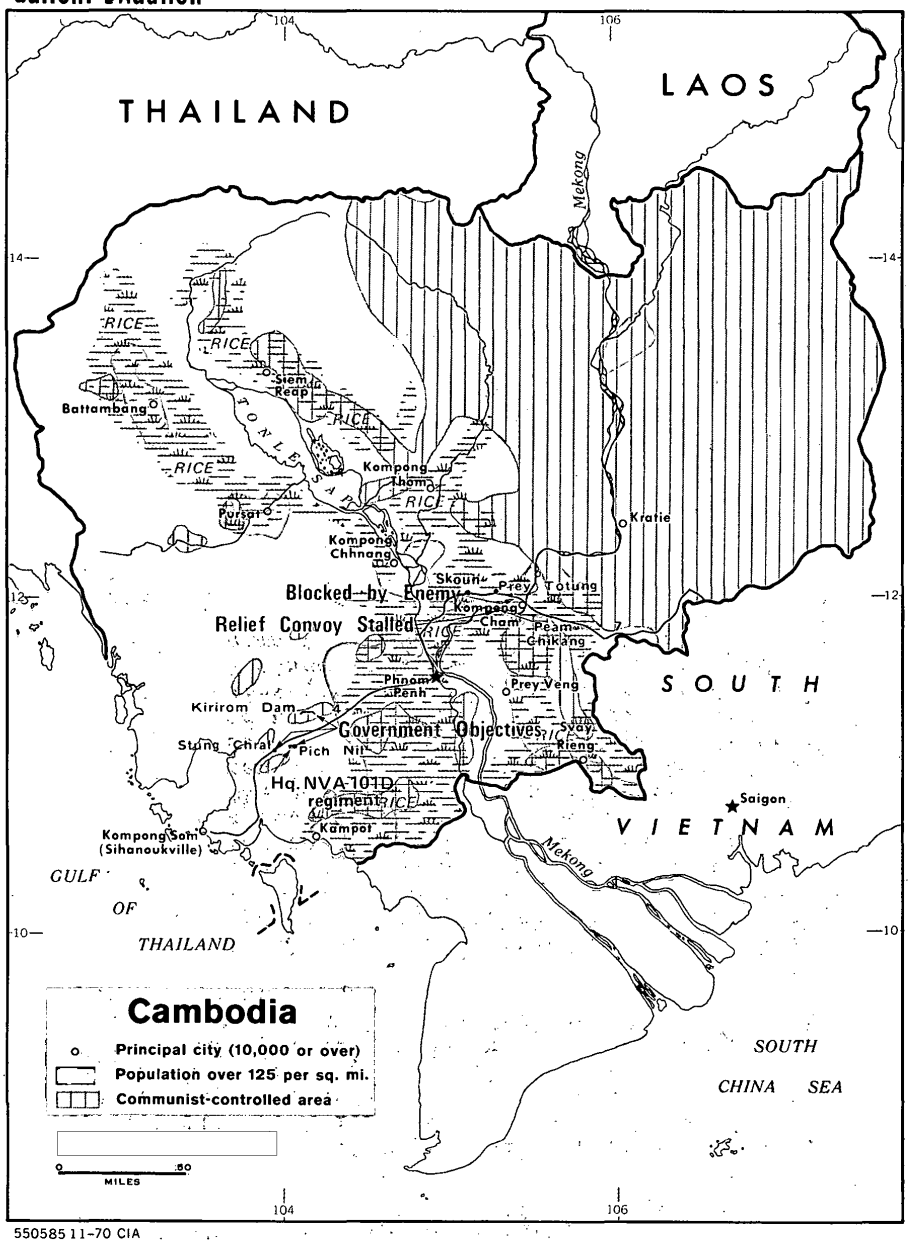
Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

A 16-ship government convoy trying to move up the Mekong to relieve Kompong Cham is stalled at Peam Chikang, still some 20 miles southwest of the city. The convoy, which suffered substantial casualties and heavy damage to two ships from enemy attacks on 22 November, is awaiting orders whether to proceed north or return to Phnom Penh. Meanwhile, government reinforcements trying to reopen Route 7 between Skoun and Kompong Cham have not yet been able to do so because of the presence of enemy troops near Prey Totung.

Unless relieved by road or river convoy, Kompong Cham city will continue to rely on air drops; Communist harassing fire is keeping cargo planes from landing at its airfield.

In southwestern Cambodia along Route 4, government soldiers are moving to retake positions in the Kirirom area that were lost during coordinated Communist attacks over the weekend. Six Cambodian Army battalions are scheduled to launch counterattacks against enemy forces--believed to include elements of the North Vietnamese 101D Regiment--now holding the Pich Nil pass overlooking Route 4, the Kirirom hydroelectric complex, and the Stung Chral cartridge factory.

The Kirirom plant services light industry in and around Phnom Penh, but is a relatively small source of the capital's total power supply. The cartridge factory apparently was largely destroyed by retreating Cambodian troops.

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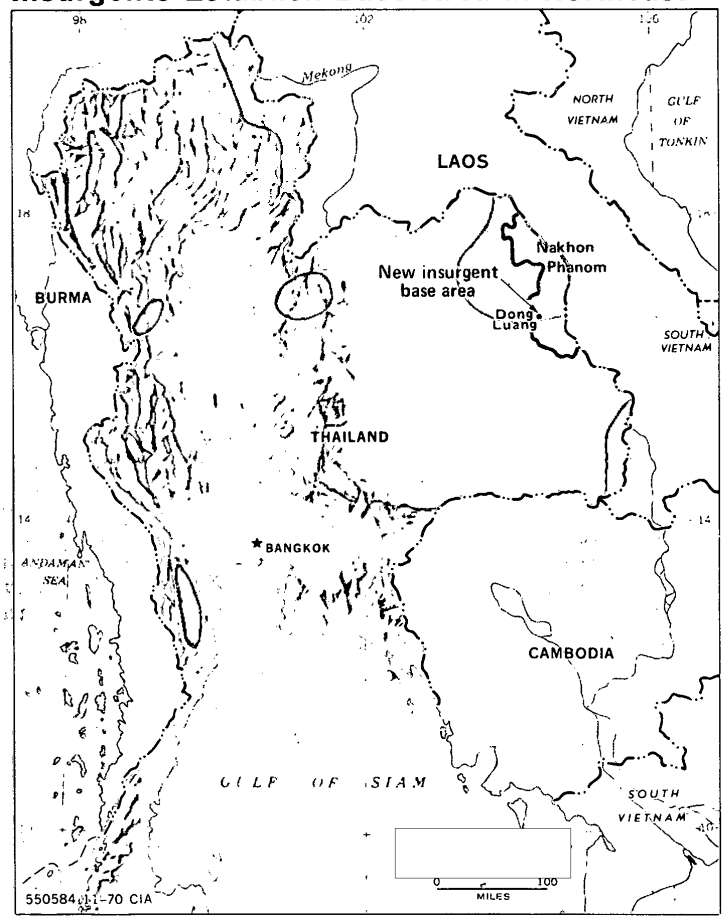
Insurgents Establish Base Area in Northeast



Area of insurgent activity

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THAILAND

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the Communists for the first time have established a secure base, located in the Dong Luang area of Nakhon Phanom Province. This region has been the most active insurgent area since the movement in the northeast began in 1965. The base not only has supported the training and indoctrination of insurgents and the filling out of quasimilitary village units, but has facilitated an increase in external support. There are reports that increasing numbers of AK-47 assault rifles are arriving from Laos, and there are indications that additional Thai cadre are returning from training in China and North Vietnam.

During the rainy season, the insurgents concentrated on improving their organization and village support network. They so far have avoided large-scale or highly visible actions. Increased terrorism and harassment of the government's fledgling village defense forces are designed to gain the initiative without prompting a major counteroffensive. Nevertheless, the Thai authorities believe that the insurgency in the northeast is well in hand.

For some time the Thai Army has wished to turn over its counterinsurgency role to police and civilian agencies and the troublesome situations in Laos and Cambodia have given it an opportunity. Since midsummer, it has reduced its counterinsurgency forces in the area by two-thirds, and they now number less than 1,000. The army now is under orders to engage in suppression operations only in response to emergency situations.

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GUINEA

Heavy firing occurred sporadically in various parts of Conakry yesterday, but most of the external force that landed on Sunday is unaccounted for. The government has not yet produced any hard evidence that it has captured or killed any of the invaders. The ships which brought them--almost certainly from Portuguese Guinea--departed early yesterday.

Well-armed Guinean regular troops guarded all key points in and near Conakry yesterday. The government continued to broadcast claims of complete victory, but was also saying that "the struggle continues" and advising vigilance against possible new attacks. This morning the government radio announced that another landing attempt had been repulsed during the night.

Yesterday's incidents appear mainly attributable to jumpy Guinean Army and militia patrols bent on flushing the intruders from hiding.

The UN fact-finding mission authorized by the Security Council early yesterday will consist of the permanent representatives of Finland, Poland, Colombia, Nepal, and Zambia. It is scheduled to leave for Guinea today.

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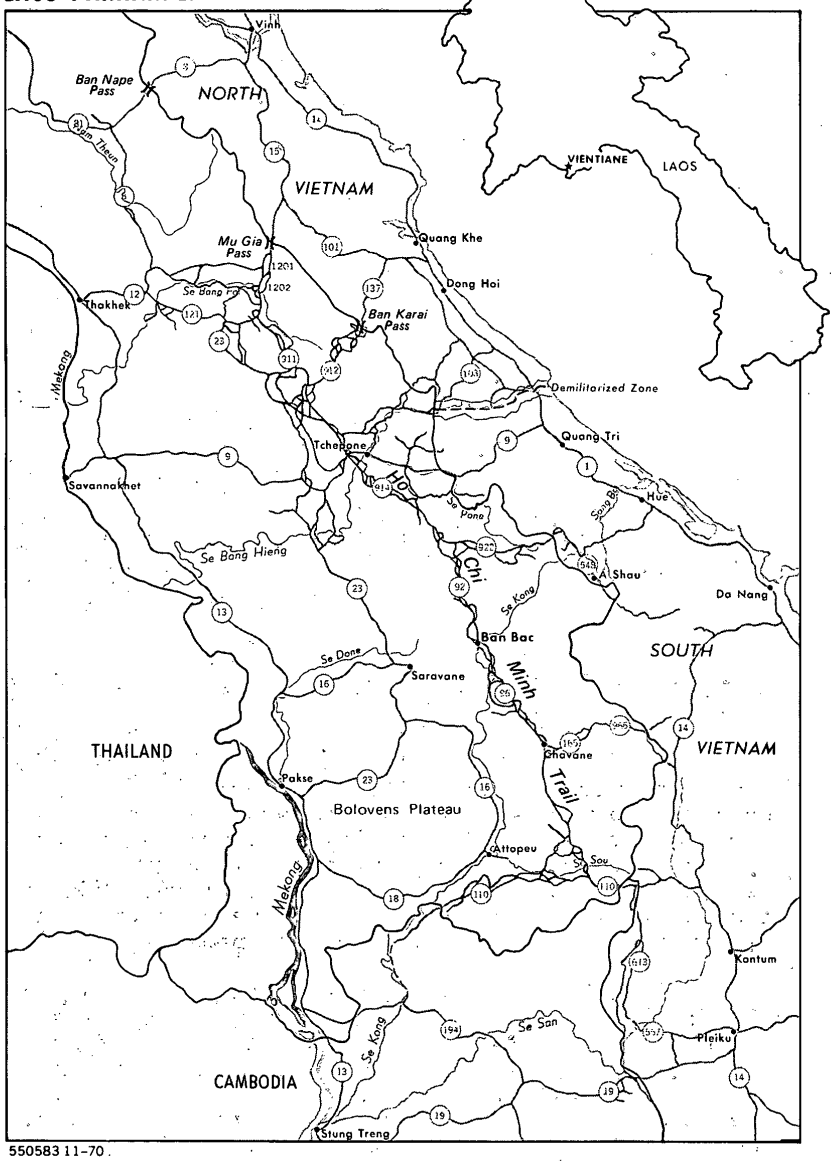
LAOS PANHANDLE



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NOTES

Laos - South Vietnam: Dry season supply activity is again under way in the Laotian panhandle after being delayed by unusually late heavy rains accompanied by bombing of supply routes. During the past week, Communist logistic organizations located between the Mu Gia Pass and Ban Bac in the southern panhandle have reported receiving and shipping cargoes by truck. Air and ground detections of truck movements also increased markedly.

USSR - Communist China: The trade agreement signed yesterday in Peking, the first since 1967, is the culmination of talks begun in February. Trade between the two countries has continued despite the lack of any formal arrangements, but it declined to an all-time low of $56 million last year. The signing of the new pact suggests an increase of trade, although the details of the agreement and its duration have not been announced.

Egypt-USSR:

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